

Luke's Journey

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Summary: A "hero's journey"? Yeah, I guess you could call it that.

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The subject of Luke Skywalker's sexuality is as enigmatic as it is controversial. Nevertheless, it is indeed possible for us to get a good handle on the issue through a critical analysis of some important lines of Star Wars dialogue.

Let's begin with the scene in which Princess Leia lays eyes on Luke for the first time. Is she elated to be rescued? Is she shocked at the way Luke bursts into her cell? No. Rather, the very first words out of her mouth are "Aren't you a little short for a stormtrooper?" This suggests that Luke wasn't as physically "gifted" as, say, Chewbacca or Han (of whom she asks, clearly awestruck, "You came in that thing? You're braver than I thought!").

Later in ANH, Biggs, Luke's boyhood chum and lifelong pal, asks him the pointed question "At that speed, do you think you'll be able to pull out in time?" Here, the obvious implication is that Biggs doesn't believe his long-time friend has the self-control or physical ability to carry out some of his manly duties.

There are several noticeable scenes sprinkled throughout the trilogy in which the audience is exposed to what can only be described as Luke's sexual "naivete".

Take, for example, the scene in which the more worldly Han chides Luke immediately after the younger man exposes his preoccupation with skin-deep beauty. "She may not look like much," Han reprimands, "but she's got it where it counts."

Compare this to a similar scene in TESB, when Yoda must also direct

Luke not to focus on such trivial, external appearances. "Size matters not," the old Jedi Master counsels. "Judge me by my size, do you?" he asks rhetorically. "And well you should not," he warns.

Consider the long hours Luke spends on his lonely journey to Dagobah. There's obviously a limit to what he can do by himself in the cockpit. Here, Lucas hints that the young Jedi has stumbled onto his droid's "special attachment". Tellingly, at one point in the trip Luke tells R2, "I'd like to keep it on manual control for a while." None too subtly, Lucas is suggesting to us that Luke is something of a novice sexually and, not having mastered even the most basic of techniques, needs as much practice as he can get. This argument is reinforced by Yoda's later admonition, "Control, control! You must learn control!"

By the end of the trilogy, however, it's clear that Luke is finally starting to grow into full-fledged manhood.

For example, early in TESB, Han Solo still feels it necessary to provide to Luke with a rather pointed explanation of his recent encounter with Princess Leia. Solo, seeing the confusion written all over Luke's face, tells his young friend that "I must've hit it pretty close to the mark to get her all riled up like that, huh, kid?" But by ROTJ, Han actually defers to Luke in at least one important scene! "Hey, Luke, thanks for coming after me," he gushes. "Now I owe you one."

And when Luke bids what could be a final farewell to his sister on Endor, he patiently explains to her why he must face Darth Vader. "There is good in him," he states simply, "I've felt it." Lucas wisely left footage of this father-son encounter on the cutting room floor, but the implication is obvious.

By the end of the trilogy, Luke has gone a long way from being a simple farmboy on Tatooine. While at first glance we might not think that the scope of the Star Wars trilogy is wide enough to include the tale of young man's journey into sexual maturity, a closer examination of the facts has revealed otherwise.

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